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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NICOSIA 000771

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SUBJECT: FM GUL VISIT TO NORTHERN CYPRUS: LITTLE OBVIOUS  
CHANGE IN TURKISH POLICY

Classified By: Classified by AMB. Ron Schlicher for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d)

11. (C) Summary: During his September 18-19 visit to the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)", Turkish President Abdullah Gul delivered what seemed to be an intentionally mixed message in an effort to please both Turkish Cypriot "two states" hard-liners and pro-2004 referendum forces. His 22-hour visit, however, brought little in the way of policy shifts. For pro-solution Turkish Cypriots, Gul called for a U.N.-brokered comprehensive solution to create a "partnership state" based on bizonality, political equality, and Turkish guarantor status. For hard-liners, he stated that any solution would have to take into account the realities of "two separate peoples, two separate democratic structures, and two separate states." Gul only raised the Annan Plan when queried and expressed regret that the GOC had not answered Talat's September 5th call to accelerate the July 8 process. Gul also warned against linking the Cyprus question with Turkey's E.U. accession bid, and called for an end to "TRNC" isolation. Predictably, he praised Turkish forces as a guarantee of peace on the island. He did, however, offer an olive branch of sorts to Greek Cypriots when he called for a post-solution "vision of unity" that would encompass a post-solution Cyprus as well as Greece. The Cypriot Government and media responded harshly to the visit, focusing on Gul's "two-state" message. For its part, the Turkish "Embassy" said that Gul's visit brought no change in policy direction. Ruling Republic Turkish Party (CTP) insiders interpreted Gul's utterances as supportive of their pro-solution policy and seemed pleased with the visit. End Summary.

12. (C) Turkish President Abdullah Gul's September 18-19 visit to the "TRNC"--traditionally the first "foreign" visit by a Turkish head of state--included an address to "parliament", a one-on-one meeting with "President" Mehmet Ali Talat followed by a joint press conference, Iftar dinner, reception, meeting with former "TRNC President" Rauf Denktas, visit to the Turkish Peace Forces Command (KTBK) as well as meetings with both opposition and "government" parties in the office of the "Speaker of Parliament." The opposition Democratic (DP) and National Unity (UBP) parties even made a one-time exception to their year-long parliamentary boycott to attend Gul's speech, though DP did not attend the parties' meeting.

13. (C) In blow-over from Turkish politics, a separate schedule was organized for First Lady Hayrunissa Gul to avoid clashes with the Turkish military, which objects to Ms. Gul's headscarf. Consequently, Gul was not offered the military honor guard at the airport that then Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer received during his 2000 visit. He did, however, review honor guards at the KTBK headquarters and at the "Presidential" residence. In a September 20th meeting with Poloff, ruling CTP General Secretary Ahmet Kalyoncu scoffed at the need to protect the military's sensitivities since

head scarves are not an issue in the "TRNC", even for the center-left CTP.

#### TWO STATES, THEN ONE "PARTNERSHIP" STATE

¶4. (C) Gul offered up something for Turkish Cypriots of every political stripe in both his "parliamentary address" and in his joint press conference with "TRNC President" Mehmet Ali Talat. Gul pledged support for the "TRNC state" and its existence. He stated that a solution on the island would "have to be based on realities", namely the existence of "two peoples, two democracies, and two states." (Note: In a September 18 press conference, Gul also added "two religions." This mention of religion was not welcomed by the profoundly secular Turkish Cypriots, and it was dropped in his September 19 speech before "parliament" End Note). While the "two realities" statement infuriated the Greek Cypriot press and the GOC, Turkish Cypriot journalist and pro-solution supporter Sami Ozuslu warned us against "exaggerating" Gul's "two state" comments: "Turkey recognizes the TRNC, so of course the talk is of two states. I would not blow it out of proportion." Publicly, he dubbed Gul's visit "constructive" in one of his columns. Gul also warned against "targeting" the Turkish military on the island with "unbecoming" statements and praised the military as an "guarantee" of peace and tranquility. Gul noted that a "lasting peace" had still not been achieved, a poke at the GOC about the continued need for Turkish troops in the "TRNC".

¶5. (C) At the same time, the Turkish President called for a U.N.-brokered comprehensive solution to create a "partnership state" based on bizonality, political equality, and Turkish guarantor status. He complained that "President" Talat's offer to find a solution by the end of 2008 had been rejected by the "Greek side" and said that the Turkish side remained

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committed to a solution. For his part, Talat repeated his September 5th call to speed up the peace process and broker a solution by the end of 2008. In a September 19th meeting with Poloff, CTP Foreign Affairs Secretary Kutlay Erk told us that Gul's position was supportive of the party's pro-solution effort. He, along with Kalyoncu, were not optimistic however about the September 5 process, at least as long as Papadopolous remains in power.

¶6. (U) Gul also reaffirmed Turkey's commitment to its E.U. accession path and warned against linking the Cyprus question with it. He called for an end to the "TRNC's isolation and restrictions against it. He said that the Turkish side "had done more than its part" to achieve peace.

#### ANNAN PLAN SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

¶7. (SBU) Gul also took a balanced line regarding the Annan Plan, neither demanding its restoration or its abandonment. In a September 18th press conference with Talat, the Turkish President said that, "We cannot completely ignore it (Annan Plan) and start again from scratch...It is definitely a plan that should be referred to." Even Former "President" Rauf Denktas--a Annan Plan opponent--quipped after meeting Gul that they no longer had "differences" since the Annan Plan no longer existed. (Note: Gul only raised the Annan Plan when asked. End Note)

#### OLIVE BRANCH TO GOC GETS LOST

¶8. (SBU) Gul extended an olive branch of sorts to the GOC in a call "to spread peace, stability, and welfare" in the eastern Mediterranean after a "comprehensive solution on the island" creates a "partnership state" i.e., a post-solution Republic of Cyprus. He also invited Greece to be part of this eastern Mediterranean Troika. (Comment: The call is clearly for three states: Greece, Cyprus, and Gul's "partnership

state", not four. End Comment). Turkish "DCM" Levent Eler told poloff on September 21 that the eastern Mediterranean offer was "real" if a solution could be achieved.

#### GREEK CYPRIOT RESPONSE FAST AND FURIOUS

¶9. (U) Greek Cypriots were quick to attack the Gul visit, officially and in the press. On September 18th, the GOC Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a September 18th press release calling the visit "a provocation" and said Gul was "following the orders given by Turkish Generals." Government Spokesman Vasilis Palmas followed on September 19th by stating that, "Mr. Gul's statement (regarding the existence of two peoples, states, democratic systems, and religions) constitute additional proof...of the negative approach towards the agreed July 8 process." All Greek Cypriot political parties condemned the visit as well. Press coverage was in line with official comments. It saw Gul's talk of "two-states" as a move away from the Gambari process.

#### TURKISH "EMBASSY": NOTHING HAS CHANGED

¶10. (C) Turkish "Embassy" DCM Levent Eler told Poloff on September 21st that the "there is nothing new" in Gul's statements. He repeated Turkish support for a bi-communal, bi-zonal solution under U.N. auspices. (Note: Gul did not use "bi-communal" in his speech before "Parliament." End Note). Eler was quick to point out, however, that the parameters of any U.N. framework would have to be new, and not a rehashing of earlier versions. He also shied away from defining what exactly Gul meant by a "partnership state": "It is unclear at present, it could be a federation or a confederation." He complained that Turkey had been as "flexible" as it could on Cyprus, especially in view of Greek Cypriot intransigence. Finally, he expressed frustration at the international community's inability (including that of the U.S.) to help the Turkish Cypriots.

¶11. (C) Comment: With the exception of the far-left, most Turkish Cypriots--each for his own reason--was pleased with the Gul visit. While Gul's emphasis of "two-states" may indicate a change in tone away from the idea of reunification through federation, in all his public statements he expressed clear support for an ultimate single-state solution under the auspices of the U.N. As one Turkish Cypriot contact pointed out, it would have been odd if he did not mention "two-states" given Turkey's recognition of the "TRNC." How Gul's "partnership" state may ever look, however, is an open question, and it is worth noting the absence of "bi-communal", "reunification", "July 8", and "federation" in his "Parliamentary" address. Increased frustration among both Turks and Turkish Cypriots--and a desire to strengthen the

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"TRNC" government--may be the cause of Gul's "two-state" tone. End Comment.  
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